

**Fostering Research for Peacebuilding in
Guatemala, Central America and Colombia:
A Review of the IDRC Record, 1998-2001**

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Development researchers and their funders have to become more savvy at influencing with ideas.

Cerstin Sander¹

La investigación y propuesta sin incidencia en el poder político, casi nunca tienen resultados. (Without advocacy towards powerholders, research and proposals rarely have impact.)

Carmen Rosa de León²

IDRC has been most influential when we have focused, and when that focus has enabled us to show that we could add more value than the modest funds we provide.

Maureen O'Neil³

Introduction

Over three years ago in July-August 1998 IDRC sent a mission to Central America to explore possibilities for supporting research on peacebuilding issues in the region.⁴ The team encountered a region with rich experiences in the field, from the Contadora and Esquipulas peacemaking efforts in the 1980s to the accumulated insights of three distinct national peace processes – in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. Although the official regional agenda had shifted since, incomplete peacebuilding hampered long-term development efforts in Nicaragua and El Salvador. In Guatemala, the last country in which peace accords had been negotiated after decades of war, peace remained the framework for national reconstruction but the specter of incomplete implementation also loomed on the horizon.

Against this backdrop the IDRC team concluded that there were compelling reasons to expand the reach of the Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Program Initiative (PBR) to the isthmus. They suggested that programming be developed at national level focusing on Guatemala, and at the regional level in the rest of Central America. Those parameters were accepted by IDRC in late 1998. A new program officer was recruited to further explore thematic foci, partners and

¹ Cerstin Sander, "Development research impact: reach," paper presented at the ICRAF International Workshop on Assessing Impacts in Natural Resources Management Research, Nairobi, 27-29 April 1998, p.17.

² C. R. de León, "Guatemala," in Angel Saldomando, et al. *Diagnóstico de la investigación para la consolidación de la paz en América Central*, IDRC-PBR Working Paper 4, Ottawa, 2000, p.23.

³ Conversation with Governors and IDRC staff in Guatemala, May 2001, cited in Stephen Baranyi, Trip Report 2001-02, p.2.

⁴ The mission was led by Necla Tschirgi of IDRC-PBR and included Daniel Buckles of IDRC-MINGA as well as Hal Klepak of the Royal Military College in Kingston. See the memo by N. Tschirgi to MINGA, circa September 1999.

modalities, and develop programming within that framework. A nominal figure of CAD 750,000 per fiscal year was allocated for this regional portfolio in April 1999.

What have PBR and IDRC achieved, in the field of peacebuilding in Central America since then? What was the rationale behind initial PBR efforts in the region? What major challenges do we face, what lessons have we learned, and what are some options for the future?

This paper offers answers to those questions, drawing on project evaluations and project completion reports, trip reports and ongoing conversations with a range of stakeholders: IDRC staff, research partners, as well as government officials and civil society leaders in the region and in Canada. The first part focuses on Guatemala, the main terrain for PBR programming in the Hemisphere. The next deals with PBR programming at the Central American level. The following section analyzes our exploration of programming options in Colombia – an initiative which was not anticipated in 1998 but became increasingly urgent from 1999 onward. These threads are pulled together in the last section, as reflections on options for PBR programming in Latin America. A theme running through this review is the link between PBR efforts in this region and wider PBR priorities, including the attempt to scale up global programming.

PBR programming in Latin America is at an important juncture. In three years we have established a range of partnerships and a promising portfolio of projects in the region, within a clear programming framework. Since IDRC's Third Corporate Strategic Planning Framework (CSPF III) ends in March 2004, we have two and a half more years to show results from our substantial investments – of almost CAD 2.65 million by the end of 2001. The recruitment of a new Senior Program Specialist to lead PBR programming in Latin America offers a unique opportunity to take stock of what we have accomplished and learned in this region to date. This review documents our “performance story” as objectively as possible, in an attempt to inspire the new team to build on and hopefully surpass what we have nurtured in recent years.

Guatemala

The preliminary framework

In June 1999 the new PBR program officer traveled to Guatemala to meet with a broad range of researchers, government officials, civil society leaders and donors. On his return he tabled a paper analyzing the implementation of the peace accords and setting out a preliminary framework for PBR programming in five areas.⁵

Human rights and democratisation. The paper acknowledged the importance of the many peacebuilding issues in this domain: justice for past human rights violations, judicial reform to

⁵ Stephen Baranyi, “Conclusions from the June 14-15 Mission to Guatemala : A Preliminary Framework for PBR Country Programming,” 13 July 1999. This recommendation to focus programming on a few themes was novel for PBR, since the PI had been pursuing broad-band programming on a large range of issues since its creation in 1996.

eradicate impunity, the reform of electoral institutions and political parties, etc. Yet it argued that PBR should focus on **security sector reform** given its centrality to democratization and postwar reconstruction, the promising framework for reforms set out in the peace accords, the existence of several attractive policy research initiatives, and PBR's considerable experience with research on these issues in Africa. It suggested that programming on this theme could "help Guatemalans have a modest but significant impact on the behaviour of security agencies in the coming years", and could link up to PBR programming in Central America and beyond.

Economics of peacebuilding. Among the many important economic aspects of peacebuilding the paper argued that **tax reform** was the area in which PBR could make the greatest difference in Guatemala given key provisions in the peace accords, the apparently bright prospects of the Fiscal Pact dialogue process, and the possibilities of partnering with some of IDRC's economic research programs in this domain.

Indigenous peoples. The peace accords also include an agreement dedicated to the rights and identity of indigenous peoples and numerous other provisions pertaining to their interests. An area which seemed especially promising was **education reform**, where the convergence of national and international interests increased the likelihood that the policy framework negotiated in 1998 would be implemented, where there was space for research-based policy dialogue, and where possibilities for partnering with IDRC's Assessment of Social Policy Reform (ASPR) Program seemed fair. The paper also highlighted the importance of debates on new forms of political participation by indigenous peoples, but noted that the space of substantive reforms seemed more uncertain in this area.

Natural resource management. Of the many NRM issues relevant to peacebuilding the paper identified **land** as the most critical: the grotesquely unequal distribution of land was a root cause of the war, there were extensive provisions in several peace accords to redress these inequities, there had been progress on their implementation since 1996 and there were interesting research initiatives afoot in this area. In addition, IDRC's MINGA Program had considerable experience fostering research on the management of land-based disputes and had signaled an interest in partnering with PBR in this domain.

Donor roles. The sometimes contradictory approaches of northern donors in postwar contexts had been a focus of several projects supported by IDRC, including the War-torn Societies Project (WSP), and was a central concern of our work on Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA). It seemed logical to explore options for programming on this theme in Guatemala, particularly given that the international community was attempting to apply lessons learned in El Salvador and other situations with regards, for example, to harmonizing peacebuilding and broader economic policies. Given the abundance of northern research on this topic, it seemed especially important to search for opportunities to support Guatemalan research on this theme.

Although the specific interests of women in peacebuilding were not singled out as an entry point, the paper noted possibilities for fostering the integration of gender perspectives in research on

some issues. It also noted the need to begin preparing for the eventual evaluation of PBR programming in Guatemala. The paper suggested that PBR should forge partnerships with selected other donors, especially those with field offices, to compensate for the absence of an IDRC presence on the ground in Central America. Finally, it concluded that given the uncertainties at the time, IDRC “would be wise to wait until the political dust settles before making large commitments in an environment where risk remains a significant concern.”

Annex 1 contains a full list of the PBR-funded projects approved in Guatemala, in Central America and Colombia to date. Of the ten projects that PBR has funded in Guatemala, seven were approved in the first 18 months, within the general framework outlined above. Many of these have been completed. We are therefore in a good position to take stock of what our partners have accomplished, and what we have learned, through this first generation of projects.

The framework used in this analysis is simple. First we discuss the results of each project in terms of knowledge generation, policy influence and capacity-building. Then we examine three sets of factors that explain results: project design and characteristics of partner institutions; IDRC inputs; and wider contextual factors, especially the impact of broader political economic trends.⁶

First-generation projects

The first Guatemalan initiative supported by PBR was a research project on **Tax reform and Peacebuilding in Guatemala**, carried out by the Faculty of Economics at the University of San Carlos (USAC) with a small grant from IDRC and funding from Rights & Democracy (ICHRDD). This project yielded a solid study and policy proposals on income tax reform – highlighting ways of increasing revenues through tighter enforcement and the elimination of income-regressive exemptions – and a less rigorous paper on the property tax regime. Both studies were presented widely though neither was published. Key recommendations from the first paper were picked up by the Fiscal Pact Preparatory Commission and codified in the Fiscal Pact. This initial influence seems to have been due to the quality of the research and the reputation/positioning of Ana de Molina, the lead researcher, in the Fiscal Pact negotiations. Yet despite these promising results, the Portillo government’s failure to implement the Fiscal Pact negated the impact of this and many other research projects.

Some of these limitations – and the difficulties PBR experienced in closing this project – were due to the institutional weaknesses of USAC; the small size of our grant did not enable us to make a difference in this regard. PBR’s limited capacity to provide substantive support on economic issues, and the inability to obtain back-up from ICHRDD or from other IDRC programs, also constrained the project. But the main factor limiting impact has been the inability

⁶ This framework is derived from the work of IDRC’s Evaluation Unit, especially from Sarah Earl, “Outcomes and the factors which influence their realization: A synthesis of forty-two completed project case studies,” Ottawa, IDRC Evaluation Unit, 2000.

of the Guatemalan government to follow through on the Fiscal Pact and related peace accords.⁷

In May 1999 the Guatemala branch of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) received a medium-sized grant from PBR to pursue research on **Military Policy and Security Agendas in Guatemala**. Their research generated several papers and a manuscript offering a novel perspective on the government's uneven compliance with the peace accord on the role of the army in a democratic society – arguing that it was the weakness of civilian institutions, not only the resistance of Army officials, that explained the limited implementation of the security provisions in the peace accords. FLACSO also offered innovative proposals on the creation of a new civilian-led security system. Most of these outputs have been widely disseminated and some of the papers have been published, but the manuscript is being revised due to the critical feedback received from colleagues. FLACSO's pioneering attempt to undertake an original study of the armed forces from a gender perspective was unsuccessful but it helped them develop a more sophisticated strategy for dealing with this challenge in a second phase. The project also enhanced the research capacity of the two younger team members. It strengthened FLACSO's participation in a parallel, UN-funded policy dialogue process on security issues, and may have contributed to modest policy innovations in this sector. PBR experienced significant challenges in attempting to close this project in a satisfactory manner.

The uneven results of this initial collaboration are partly attributable to FLACSO's institutional weaknesses, especially its persistent difficulties with project management, and the tendency of the security studies team to give priority to other commitments. PBR was in a better position to provide substantive accompaniment on this topic – except on gender analysis, where it was recognized that a greater investment was needed by both sides. The national crisis of governance hampered the parallel security policy dialogue process and made it impossible for any of the emerging reform agreements to be put into practice. Most of these tendencies were discussed with FLACSO during the project closure phase, and it was agreed that a more formal joint evaluation would be undertaken at the end of the next cooperation cycle.⁸

One innovative feature of PBR programming in Guatemala is our direct support to indigenous peoples' organizations. Our grant to the Permanent National Commission on Education Reform of the Coordination of Organizations of the Mayan People of Guatemala (CNPRE-COPMAGUA), for research on **Financing Education in Guatemala** was a first experiment in this regard. With this medium-sized grant CNPRE generated an original and fairly rigorous analysis of education financing from an indigenous and gender perspective, as well as a series of sound policy proposals. Both were disseminated to key government and civil society stakeholders. The project significantly enhanced CNPRE's capacity for budgetary analysis, positioned it at the cutting edge of the national debate, and enhanced its policy dialogue with key

⁷ Silke Reichrath, "Tax Reform and Peacebuilding in Guatemala - Mini Completion Report," circa March 2000.

⁸ Stephen Baranyi, Project Completion Report 004640, March 2001.

officials in the Ministry of Education including the Minister himself. Nonetheless, their proposals for a gradual increase and reorientation of education financing cannot be implemented without movement on the taxation and other reforms codified in the Fiscal Pact. This project was extremely well administered by CNPRE.

The exemplary success of this project can be traced to several factors. Foremost among these is the competence of the project leaders, despite the institutional difficulties experienced by COPMAGUA in recent years, and their shrewd positioning at the juncture of government-civil society policy debates on education. Second, even after IDRC's Assessment of Social Policy Reforms (ASPR) program was dissolved, PBR was able to provide valuable substantive support – mostly through the contributions of the PBR Intern. An enabling policy environment in the education sector has also been crucial, yet even here the broader crisis of governance and the inability to move forward with fiscal reform are impeding actual progress in the redistribution of educational expenditures to address inherited ethnic, gender and class inequities. Most of these issues were addressed in CNPRE's own evaluation of this project.⁹

Our second foray beyond traditional research partners was with COPMAGUA's National Permanent Commission on Land (CNPT-COPMAGUA). With a grant from PBR and complementary funding from ICHRDD, CNPT produced a legislative proposal for the **Creation of an Agrarian and Environmental Jurisdiction** in Guatemala. The proposal for the establishment of an accessible, specialized tribunals system to resolve land-based disputes seems robust; it is certainly the first draft law proposed by a Guatemalan indigenous organization on a matter that is usually the preserve of elite jurists. The proposal was generated on the basis of document research, interviews with national experts and consultation with community leaders. It has been disseminated to many stakeholders, together with a useful background analysis. The study has strengthened the capacity of CNPT members to understand and eventually negotiate with the government on this issue, and contributed modestly to keeping the issue on the public agenda. The project has been fairly well managed from an operational standpoint.

Yet it is fair to ask why CNPT's efforts have not been as successful as those of CNPRE. First, policy dialogue in the agrarian sector has been much less agile than in the education sector due to the weakness of the Ministry of Agriculture, the (related) historical resistance of the landed elites to reforms, and strategic disagreements among popular groups. These tendencies caused major delays in the negotiation of agreements in the Mixed Commission on Land (COPART), the forum in which CNPT has represented indigenous and peasant interests vis-a-vis the government on "structural" land issues. As a result negotiations on the creation of an agrarian jurisdiction have been postponed at least until 2002. CNPT has also been less successful than CNPRE in adapting to the fragmentation of COPMAGUA. These pressures drained time from the project. PBR's own time investment was insufficient to compensate for these factors. The limited back-up from IDRC colleagues from the natural resources area, and ICHRDD's modest capacity to

⁹ Silke Reichrath, PCR 100437, June 2001. The use of an RSP to provide CNPRE with CAD 3,500 of seed money to develop this project was an excellent investment.

accompany the project, have also constrained our ability to provide effective support.¹⁰

PBR also provided a grant to the Centre for Study and Documentation of the Western Frontier of Guatemala (CEDFOG), for research on **Peacebuilding and Civil society in Huehuetenango**. The idea was to match a leading researcher (Jenny Pearce of Bradford University) with a local centre to enable them to pursue joint research on peacebuilding issues in Huehuetenango, a marginal area of Guatemala. With additional support from Oxfam-UK and Project Counselling Services, CEDFOG carried out research on postwar conditions in Huehuetenango and presented their results in two workshops. Despite a supplement and considerable input from Jenny Pearce and PBR, none of the outputs were published. Yet this grant helped CEDFOG establish itself as a local resource centre and obtain an institutional development grant from the Ford Foundation.

The limited results of this project are rooted in the gap between the goals of CEDFOG, which wanted to use research and outreach to establish itself, versus IDRC and Pearce, who also wanted research results. The idea of turning a proposal from Pearce into an institution-strengthening project was valid but CEDFOG was not ready for the proposed research and we did not provide the resources required to develop this capacity in a year. In the future, it may be more efficient to leave such challenges to funders with a solid field presence and more capacity-building experience, particularly when local resource centres have little research capacity to build on.¹¹

Finally, PBR contributed to a much larger project by the Centre for Regional Research in Mesoamerica (CIRMA) on **Inter-ethnic Relations and Educational Reform in Guatemala**. Based on the manuscripts submitted with the final reports, it is reasonable to expect this project to yield several ground-breaking publications on the complex and mediated evolution of inter-ethnic relations in Guatemala. Over the long run this research may have an impact on public perceptions and some public policies. In the meantime, CIRMA's effort to link this research to the revision of history social science school texts continues to be hampered by the ability of Congress to block major public sector curriculum reform initiatives. One positive result of this project for IDRC has been the initiation of a parallel funding and policy dialogue relationship with CIDA on education issues (a CIDA social development priority) in Guatemala.¹²

Fine-tuning the framework

By early 2000 some of the tendencies noted above had already become apparent. Our initial programming experience confirmed the potential importance of research on four entry points, namely on land issues, security, taxation and education reform. It suggested that donor roles on

¹⁰ Silke Reichrath, PCR 100404, August 2001.

¹¹ Silke Reichrath, PCR 100074, September 2001.

¹² Stephen Baranyi, PCR 100496, November 2001.

peacebuilding, may be less important to Guatemalans than anticipated. Yet it also showed us that accompanying projects even in four areas was difficult given the technical complexity of the issues and policy networks in each sector. On this basis we recommended a further narrowing of thematic foci to emphasize one area and maintain modest responsive programming on two or three more themes. The choice of a priority theme was made contingent on receiving clearer offers of substantive back-up from other PBR staff or from other IDRC programs.¹³

Our initial experience also led us to recommend that PBR maintain a balance between supporting established research centres and nurturing new centres, especially the emerging research capacity of indigenous organizations. It suggested that we should continue to foster gender analysis in projects. Finally, it noted that many of our Guatemalan partners were interested in linking up with PBR partners in other peace processes. In September 2000 these ideas crystalized into a refined programming framework for PBR in Guatemala. In brief, we decided to:

- **Focus on four themes**, giving **priority to land** issues on the assumption that our relationship with MINGA would add knowledge and policy depth to PBR's own programming experience in this area.
- Maintain **responsive programming** on three other themes: **education, security and fiscal policy reform**. On the latter, we would focus our support on research dealing with public spending, and **nurture research at the intersection of these areas, namely on the fiscal aspects of land, security and education policy**.
- More explicitly **privilege support for indigenous organizations** as well as research projects that were **gender-sensitive**.

These are still the parameters for PBR programming in Guatemala.¹⁴ Within this framework PBR approved a second phase project with FLACSO deals with **Security and Defence in Guatemala**. It contains solid plans for dissemination, gender mainstreaming and evaluation.¹⁵

We are also working with the Coordination of NGOs and Cooperatives (CONGCOOP) and the National Coordination of Peasant Organizations (CNOC) on a project titled **Fontierras**,

¹³ Stephen Baranyi, "PBR Programming in Guatemala, Central America and Colombia," paper presented at the PI meeting in April 2000. This move towards fewer thematic foci in Guatemala converged with the definition of a new programming framework for PBR at the Palestine meeting.

¹⁴ See the PBR website and "IDRC and Peacebuilding in Guatemala" infosheet, September 2000.

¹⁵ In the end IDRC commissioned its own evaluation, which concluded that despite its audacious plans and significant influence to date, FLACSO's security research has been undermined by poor management and by contextual factors such as the national political deadlock. See Hal Klepak, "Evaluation report: FLACSO Guatemala security projects", Ottawa, December 2001.

Structural Adjustment and Access to Land in Guatemala. One of its innovative aspects is the link which IDRC helped establish with international experts working on market-assisted agrarian reforms. This project complements our collaboration with CNPT: it will generate an evaluation of the Land Fund set up on the basis of a draft law negotiated by CNPT and the government in the Mixed Commission on Land. Together with the MINGA-supported project on **The Management of Communal Lands in Guatemala**, these initiatives are generating a critical mass of IDRC programming at the intersection of land and peacebuilding. This has enabled us to initiate discussions with CIDA, the Canadian NGO SOCODEVI, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, regarding potential collaboration in this field.

Finally, we are supporting a partnership between FLACSO and the Council of Mayan Organizations of Guatemala (COMG) to carry out research on **The National Budget and Mayan Identity**. This grant will enable COMG and FLACSO to analyze the gaps between public expenditures and state obligations towards indigenous peoples codified in the peace accords, in ILO Convention 169 and other binding agreements. This project will hopefully build on COPMAGUA-CNPRE's pioneering research on educational financing. It should also enable COMG, which represents a different strand of the indigenous movement from COPMAGUA, to strengthen its own capacity for policy engagement on fiscal reform issues.

Within this framework the new Latin America PO also completed negotiations on two new Guatemalan projects by the end of 2001. First, CNPRE will pursue more in-depth research and capacity-building on more specialised **fiscal policy dimensions of education reform**. Second, CNPT will collaborate with CNOC on research to prepare the ground for the next item they will be negotiating in COPART, namely the **regularization of indigenous and other land tenure**. A third project remains under negotiation: presented by the Teaching Institute for Sustainable Development (IEPADES), it would involve path-breaking research on the **fiscal aspects of security sector reform**. IEPADES has international contacts in this area and has indicated an interest in linking with PBR partners working on military budgeting in Africa.

Partners and interlocutors

Although research projects and research partners are perhaps the most visible elements of IDRC programming, they are embedded in broader networks of communication and collaboration that are vital to effective research support. PBR has developed a sizeable web of interlocutors in Guatemala, as documented in the annotated list of PBR contacts in the region. These range from civil society leaders in key sectors (particularly indigenous, peasant and women's organizations) to senior government officials in the Presidency (the secretariats for Peace, Planning and Strategic Analysis – SEPAZ, SEGEPLAN and SAE) as well as in the Ministries of Agriculture and Education. These national contacts are crucial to understanding and adapting to the shifting situation in Guatemala. One salient gap is the absence of dialogue with the private sector. Particularly if we want to deepen our work on agrarian issues, we may want to ask the Canadian Embassy or MINUGUA to introduce us to key leaders in the Cámara del Agro. Developing relationships with right-of-centre thinktanks like ASIES and CIEN may also help in this regard.

PBR has also carefully nurtured field-level contacts with key Canadian agencies, namely DFAIT, CIDA, CECI and SOCODEVI. We liaise with a broader range of Canadian agencies through the Guatemala Consultative Group convened by ICHRDD two or three times per year. These are important but limited relationships. The parallel-funding partnership with ICHRDD wound down when ICHRDD was unable to extend its field presence in Guatemala, and attempts to develop a similar relationship with CECI have not borne fruit. There may be more potential for partnering with DFAIT on selected human security research projects, with CIDA in the field of education, and with SOCODEVI on land/rural development issues, but these opportunities will have to be pursued more actively to realize their potential.

PBR has courted other international agencies with a field presence. Our extensive contact with the UN Observer Mission MINUGUA has evolved into an important non-financial collaborative relationship on land and rural development issues. Occasional contacts with UNDP, particularly in relation to FLACSO's security sector work, have not developed further. Ongoing contacts with the World Bank and IDB on education and rural development issues have considerable potential, as do the links with the Soros and Ford foundations. The parallel funding links with Oxfam-UK and Project Counselling Services, which arose out of the CEDFOG project, dwindled when those agencies failed to extend their support for CEDFOG and when their field directors were replaced. Still, a few of these links could possibly turn into strategic information exchange and even parallel-funding relationships if we invest more time in nurturing them.

Taking stock and looking forward

Table 1 in the Annex shows that PBR has appropriated almost CAD 1.2 million for Guatemala, mostly for medium-sized research projects, since early 1999. We have also invested a great deal of time nurturing our presence in that country – about 35% of one person year each year. What have we accomplished, together with our Guatemalan and other partners, during this period?

PBR has certainly accumulated extensive contacts, knowledge, a focused programming approach and promising portfolio of projects in Guatemala – a country where the peace accords still provide one of the most comprehensive frameworks for peacebuilding negotiated in the post Cold War era. This knowledge and network are great assets for IDRC, as shown by the role PBR played in arranging the visit by Governors and the President in May 2001.

PBR is also gaining valuable insights into critical dimensions of peacebuilding: our understanding of the centrality of tax reforms for peace, the ambiguities of market-assisted approaches to land distribution, the salience of cultural identity in peacebuilding, the different ways in which men and women experience postwar reconstruction, the danger of pressing forward with peace in the absence of representative political parties and broader peace constituencies ... have been enormously enriched by our Guatemalan partnerships. These insights could be documented more systematically through Guatemala-specific initiatives (such as upgrading the project profiles on our website) or through cross-regional, comparative syntheses.

Most of the completed and active projects reviewed earlier have already or will probably strengthen the research capacity of partners. Some have also enhanced the ability of civil society leaders, particularly indigenous leaders, to understand and lobby on complex policy issues like education financing and agrarian jurisprudence. This second level of capacity-building has rested on the generation of knowledge which, while not necessarily new in a universal sense, is novel in the Guatemalan context. Yet in a few cases, especially the CEDFOG project, the failure to publish results has limited the knowledge generation outcomes of valuable research.

What is more striking is that only a few projects (USAC, FLACSO and CNPRE) have had initial policy impacts in the sense that the policy proposals they generated have been well-received by some decision-makers. None have led to legislative or policy changes yet, and none have led to changes in the (budgetary, programmatic, service delivery, etc.) practices of key public or private sector institutions. This is striking because almost all of these projects were designed to take advantage of established policy dialogue processes derived from the peace accords – such as the Consultative Commission of the Ministry of Education, the Fiscal Pact and COPART – or to build on important dialogue processes generated by civil society, as in the case of the security dialogue led by FLACSO. Part of the explanation lies in timing: it takes time to conduct research, communicate results to decision-makers, negotiate policy changes with them, and follow-up to ensure that these are actually put into practice. Yet it also reminds us that it is difficult to contribute to policy change, even in postwar settings, when there is limited elite will and/or capacity to put key commitments into effect. This is especially noteworthy because Guatemala is perhaps the most promising of the national contexts in which PBR is active.

This experience underscores the validity of nurturing PBR programming in a few, carefully-selected countries, for it is only by focusing on a few promising national processes that we can hope to develop the local knowledge, robust programming frameworks and accompaniment capacity required to generate even the modest contributions noted above. Yet the difficulties of nurturing research that contributes to policy change, even in this relatively enabling context, suggest that PBR should consolidate rather than expand programming in Guatemala. It also indicates that it might be sensible to formulate more modest expectations about the ultimate impacts of our assistance in this and other contexts where peace is still so contested.

Our Guatemalan experience also validates the attempt to focus PBR programming on a few sub-themes. The current country programming framework – with its focus on land, education, security, and fiscal reform – remains promising. Yet it may be more sustainable (especially if PBR moves to more active programming in Colombia) if we consolidate support for research in three clusters: land, education and security, focusing on the fiscal dimensions of reforms in the latter two areas. The rights of indigenous peoples and gender equity would remain cross-cutting priorities. It might also be wise to develop more modest expectations of partnership with MINGA on land issues given its limited capacity for programming in Guatemala.

This focus on a few themes also provides a basis on which to help PBR scale up collaboration with partners in other regions. Our Guatemalan partners have often asked us to help them expand

their bibliographies or link them to researchers/practitioners working on similar issues elsewhere. On security issues, we have provided modest assistance to FLACSO and IEPADES in this regard. Our indigenous partners have often stressed their desire to link up with indigenous organizations working on land and other political economy issues in the South and in Canada. Some of our partners may also be keen to join other PBR interlocutors in systematically reflecting on over-arching concerns, such as the fundamental question of what kind of peace is being built in the post Cold War era, who is benefitting, etc. Greater synergy between geographic and global programming might enable us to respond more effectively to these requests.

The approach of balancing partnerships with established research centres and supporting emerging researchers, especially indigenous organizations, also seems sound. Yet PBR should be careful before entering into partnerships with organizations whose research (or administrative) capacity is too shallow for us to nurture effectively. Fostering partnerships between emerging researchers and experts, at the international or national level, seems a feasible way of building capacity while ensuring that knowledge generation takes place. This also applies to gender mainstreaming, which often requires methodological support that can best be delivered by more advanced partners rather than by IDRC alone. PBR's emerging partnership with the Gender and Society Foundation (GESO), discussed in the next section, has much potential in this regard.

Developing true partnerships with other international agencies has proven to be more difficult than anticipated. It may be useful to focus these efforts more carefully, by cultivating relations with MINUGUA, IDB or the World Bank on land issues, with CIDA on education, with DFAIT on security issues. Only some of these can be expected to turn into parallel funding links; even fewer have co-funding potential in the IDRC sense of the term. Ongoing dialogue with Canadian agencies in the Guatemala Consultative Group is useful for information exchange and networking, but does not warrant greater investment by PBR.

Finally, given that we are two and a half years away from the end of the current IDRC programming cycle and that Guatemala has become a flagship country for PBR, this may be a good moment to plan a more systematic evaluation of our programming there. That assessment could build on the project completion reports and self-evaluations by project partners already been completed or in the pipeline. A case study of PBR programming in Guatemala, in the context of the corporate evaluation of policy outcomes led by IDRC's Evaluation Unit, could add depth to these basic assessments. This study could also include a consultation with selected partners and interlocutors, to foster a joint reading of PBR programming in Guatemala. If this emerges as a priority, it might be useful to begin planning this "closing the loop" process soon.

Central America

Antecedents

When the new PO came on board in January 1999 there were already several PBR initiatives underway at the regional level. A staff member on a short-term contract was developing some

ideas for a PBR strategy in Central America. A Canadian-Nicaraguan academic had been funded to undertake an exploratory mission to the region and make recommendations about possible PBR programming there. In the wake of Hurricane Mitch, LACRO and several programs, including PBR, established a “Mitch Fund” to support small research projects on the challenges of post-disaster reconstruction and transformation in the region. Two of the Central American proposals received as a result of the August 1998 mission were being processed as small grants. Several proposals for larger projects were awaiting review.

These initial forays into the uncharted waters of Central America produced mixed results. The in-house concept note yielded interesting ideas but few insights and none of the “local knowledge” required for a regional strategy.¹⁶ The uncertainty about who would be shaping PBR’s strategy in the region also hampered the new PO’s initial efforts. The report by the Canadian-Nicaraguan academic was not seen as particularly illuminating by LACRO and other IDRC colleagues. The accompanying proposal for a research initiative that would have been led by the same author was not well received by the Centre either.

The Mitch Fund was viewed as a useful way for IDRC to extend its partnerships in the region though it yielded few major outputs or outcomes. Likewise the two small grants approved by PBR at the beginning of 1999 – for the Centre for International Studies (CEI) and for Angel Saldomando – were useful as tools for generating new partners in Nicaragua, but they did not yield the expected outputs and do not seem to have had any significant capacity-building or policy impact. This can be attributed to the gap between their ambitious objectives and the small size of these grants, weak project design and poor management both by the Centre and by our Nicaraguan partners. This mixed experience – of trying to initiate a regional program before the PO responsible for that region was fully on board, and of using small grants without a clear strategy – is germane to PBR’s current programming challenges in other regions.¹⁷

The Arias project

One of the inherited proposals that was eventually funded by PBR is the grant to the Arias Foundation and its partners for action research on **Local Reintegration Strategies in Central America and Colombia**. The supplement granted in 2000 brought the total appropriation to CAD 431,400 – making it the largest project that PBR has funded in Latin America to date.

¹⁶ See Yianna Lambrou, “Some discussion ideas for shaping a strategy in Central America,” circa February 1999.

¹⁷ Shaukat Hassan, “Small Grants Program Evaluation,” March 2001. See also Stephen Baranyi, “Closing and learning from the Saldomando small grant,” 17 March 2000.

This project was initially managed by the Arias Foundation in Costa Rica, and CERCA, the regional umbrella network created by UN-Habitat. It was supposed to be a two year project covering six Central American countries and Colombia. Its basic objectives were to: i) study the effects of and local responses to the resettlement of persons displaced by violence; ii) generate concerted processes leading to policies and strategies addressing the multiple effects of displacement, focusing on human development at the local level; iii) foster spaces of for knowledge generation and exchange between Central America and Colombia; iv) develop new modalities for international and inter-institutional collaboration, with local communities.

In terms of outputs, the project generated six national and two sub-national studies of respectable quality, although these do not appear to have made a large contribution to the vast literature on displacement and resettlement in the region. The case studies of the four local processes which the project accompanied for the entire two years may be more original. The comparative study finally presented in mid-2001 was quite superficial. In terms of capacity-building, the project seems to have strengthened the capacity of some municipalities to generate viable local development plans through participatory processes. At least in Colombia, these processes seem to have the potential of ending up in funded projects that may in turn have an impact on local development. At a meeting with representatives of local stakeholder groups in Usme (a poor suburb of Bogotá) in December 2000, the lead PO witnessed their appreciation for how the project had helped them strengthen their dialogue processes, generate a diagnosis of their problems and options, and formulate a project proposal (for social-psychological rehabilitation, conflict resolution and peri-urban agriculture in Barrio Brillante, the poorest part of Usme) on that basis. The Usme municipal government pledged significant funds to implement the project, and the national Red de Solidaridad Social suggested that co-funding would be forthcoming. Yet by the time the project was closed, the expected funding had not yet materialized.

The external evaluation also highlighted other difficulties. These include an overly-complex network of partners that was poorly rooted in most countries, and the lead agencies' inability to deliver on their ambitious timelines and fundraising plans. Intellectually, the project suffered from a flawed research design which made it difficult to compare and accumulate insights across cases. Finally, PBR's own limited ability to substantively assist this project, given its limited in-house expertise on local governance and resettlement issues, should be noted. It is essential not to lose sight of these limitations when negotiating regional projects of this scale.¹⁸

A new approach

When PBR approved the grant to the Arias Foundation we assumed that this was just a first step towards regional programming, that a wider network of partners and a more strategic approach would have to be developed. After a trip to the region in September-October 1999 the lead PO tabled a paper sketching the outlines of such a strategy. The paper argued that despite the official shift away from a peace agenda in El Salvador, Nicaragua and at the regional level, uneven

¹⁸ Silke Reichrath, PCR 004594, October 2001.

peacebuilding kept the underlying issues – incomplete democratization and weak governance, impunity and stalled judicial reform, the proliferation of small arms and escalation of violent crime, enduring socio-economic inequalities, extreme poverty and inadequate social services for the poor – high on the agendas of civil society stakeholders. Some of these issues were being discussed by governments in regional policy fora such as the Central American Integration System (SICA). A number of centres and networks had developed the capacity for regional research on these topics but few were able to demonstrate effective policy engagement beyond the national sphere. The paper also noted the availability of “easy money” for large research projects in the region. Taking all of these tendencies into consideration the paper suggested several areas in which there might be niches for PBR regional programming.

Monitoring compliance with the Treaty of Democratic Security. This Central American treaty was signed in 1995 and was intended to institutionalize emerging conceptions of democratic/human security. The Treaty provided for self-monitoring of compliance through the SICA but these mechanisms had been underutilized and civil society remained uninvolved. Several research centres including CRIES seemed interested in the possibility of using research to review compliance with the Treaty and initiate a broader debate on its potential renovation.

Controlling the possession, use and trafficking of small arms. Efforts by the SICA Secretariat to coordinate national responses to small arms proliferation had stalled. Since then the issue had become prominent on the OAS and UN agendas. IEPADES of Guatemala proposed to use research to take advantage of this trend and revive the debate in Central America. The Arias Foundation was also active on this topic at the regional level and beyond.

Violence, democratic/human security and policy coherence. Although research on compliance with the Treaty of Democratic Security offered a window through which to address a range of enduring peacebuilding concerns, several institutions were working on these issues directly (for example on multi-sectoral approaches to postwar violence) or through the broader problem of policy incoherence. Against this backdrop FLACSO Costa Rica proposed to lead regional research effort on reconceptualizing security. IDRC also received a proposal from the Estado de la Región group to contribute to future (UNDP-inspired) regional human development reports.¹⁹

“El Diagnóstico”

None of the project ideas introduced above came to fruition in the short term. CRIES lost interest in the Treaty of Democratic Security idea due to internal changes and competing demands, though a year later it submitted a winning proposal to PBR for research on this issue. IEPADES could not develop its idea into a feasible regional project based on partnerships with centres in other countries. FLACSO Costa Rica was unable to propose ways of generating research that

¹⁹ Stephen Baranyi: “Considerations for PBR programming in Central America,” November 1999. The paper also flagged options for regional programming on the **reintegration of persons uprooted by violence**, as an extension of our involvement with the Arias project.

could move the debate beyond the reconceptualization of security which had already been codified in the Treaty of Democratic Security. And other IDRC units were not interested in buying into a PBR proposal to jointly fund the Estado de la Región project.

During this period key IDRC units began coordinating their activities through the Central America Working Group (CAWG). One option this forum explored was the idea of pursuing joint programming consultations in the region. In the end it was decided that this might not yield the insights or partnerships required. Instead, units active in the region would undertake their own consultations, and would share results with colleagues through the CAWG.

PBR drew these two threads together in early 2000 by initiating “El Diagnóstico”, a joint stock-taking exercise with key Central American interlocutors. In brief, we used a Centre-administered RSP to commission four Central American analysts to carry out a review of 20 years of research on peacebuilding issues in Central America. Under the same umbrella we worked with FUNDAUNGO in El Salvador to co-host a workshop in which draft case studies were discussed with representatives from civil society, government and the international community.

This initiative exceeded some of our expectations, especially considering the minimal funds invested by IDRC. It yielded an original study showing that there had been an impressive production of Central American research on a range of issues relevant to peacebuilding since the early 1980s. It suggested that some of these outputs had made a difference in practice, for example on the notion of democratic security codified in the 1995 Treaty, and on peace implementation in Guatemala. By and large, however, peacebuilding research in the isthmus seemed to have had little impact on policy-making or wider social change.

This study was published as a PBR working paper and was distributed widely in the region.²⁰ The process enabled us to deepen relationships with existing interlocutors, especially in the research community. It also enabled us to extend our network of contacts, for example to the Gender and Society Foundation of Costa Rica, which has the potential of becoming a key IDRC partner. Finally, the study and the process of consultation gave us the ideas, the network and the confidence needed to develop a new approach to PBR programming in Central America.

PBR learned four main lessons from this exercise. First, though the process was worthwhile, the quality of the study and the scope of participation might have been greater if PBR had invested more money upfront: a proper consultative exercise at the regional level probably merits an investment of between CAD 75-100,000 rather than the modest 25,000 spent on this venture. Second, while it seemed necessary to take stock of the whole field in this instance, exploratory studies focusing on particular themes/sub-themes might give us the depth of insight required to orient programming in other areas. This lesson is already being applied by PBR in Colombia, and seems relevant to future explorations in other regions as well as at the global level.

²⁰ Angel Saldomando et al., “Diagnóstico de la investigación para la consolidación de la paz en América Central,” IDRC-PBR Working Paper 4, Ottawa, 2000.

Third, despite the limited record of policy impact through peacebuilding research in the isthmus, PBR had connected with a sizeable network of researchers with which it could pursue the common goal of policy influence. Fourth, since regional research is expensive and PBR had generated interest among a number of promising partners working on a range of issues, we needed a new mechanism to facilitate the selection of the strongest proposals for PBR support. Clearly, the traditional IDRC method of sowing ideas and responding to proposals on a first-come-first-served basis was not a viable option for PBR at the regional level.

The competitive grants mechanism

It is these experiences which led us to establish a competitive mechanism for large PBR grants at the Central American level.²¹ In September 2000 PBR announced, by means of e-mail and through the IDRC website, the initiation of a competitive process to select a winning proposal that would receive CAD 350,000 in the coming FY. Preliminary proposals were invited on the following sub-themes within the new PBR programming framework for CSPF III:

- Democratization, with an emphasis on **options for enhancing democratic participation**, particularly for historically marginalized sectors such as women and indigenous peoples.
- The political economy of PB, emphasizing **durable solutions to land-based conflicts**.
- Human security, with an emphasis on the **regulation of small arms and the implementation of the Treaty of Democratic Security**.
- Challenges to peace, emphasizing **lessons learned in Central America** that could inform policy development in the region or beyond, including Colombia.

The call for proposals was directed at a wide range of legally recognized institutions in the region, not just established research centres. In addition to the thematic parameters noted above, PBR indicated that preliminary proposals should contain a rigorous research methodology and demonstrate the potential to generate new knowledge, influence policies and enhance capacity for sustained applied research on peacebuilding in the region. Submissions had to include preliminary monitoring and evaluation plans, and had to demonstrate financial viability on the basis of the IDRC grant or of parallel-funding from other institutions.

From a pool of six eligible preliminary proposals, PBR selected two for further development and granted them CAD 25,000 each for this purpose. The full proposals were then reviewed using slightly modified PBR procedures, and the CRIES proposal for research on the Treaty of Democratic Security was selected for further development. Several other ideas were developed

²¹ Stephen Baranyi, "Plans for the next phase of IDRC peacebuilding programming in Central America," October 2000.

into smaller projects with PBR support. Table 1 summarizes the results of this process.

Table 1: Central America grant proposals expected and received by PBR in 2001

Proponent	Topic	Status
CEI (Nicaragua) and IEPADES (Guatemala)	Small arms control in CA	Rejected in round 1 but led to approval of small grant for CEI research in Nicaragua
IJS (Angel Saldomando, Nicaragua)	Institutional responses to conflicts in Honduras, el Salvador and Nicaragua	Rejected in round 1; proponent did not renew contact
GESO (Costa Rica)	Gender and peacebuilding in CA	Rejected in round 1 but led to approval of small grant to develop a gender toolkit
ASIES (Guatemala) and partners in CA and USA	Sustainable solutions to agrarian-based violence in CA	Rejected in round 2 but door left open for modified project in Guatemala or regional
FLACSO (Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala)	Systemic responses to collective action by new social actors	Rejected in round 1; proponents did not renew contact
CRIES (Nicaragua-based regional network)	Reviewing the Treaty of Democratic Security in CA	Selected as finalist in May; PIM approved, PAD drafted
Independent Colombian researcher	Diaspora and peacebuilding	Rejected as ineligible in round 1
NSI (Canada)	The role of women in the Guatemalan and Colombian peace processes	No proposal presented but idea developed into the Engendering Peace in Colombia exploration.
Universidad de la Paz (Costa Rica)	Human security and peacebuilding in CA	Could not meet deadline and PBR could not grant the 1-month extension requested

Table 1 shows that the competitive mechanism generated a respectable number of preliminary proposals for regional research projects on a number of priority PBR issues – at a minimal cost to the proponents. The selection process enabled us to choose the two most promising ideas for further development in a rigorous and transparent manner, and provide the proponents with sufficient funds to develop their plans in greater detail. The process then enabled us to select the most promising of these two proposals, from CRIES, also in a rigorous and transparent manner.

In August 2001 we appropriated the funds for the CRIES project on **Reforming the Treaty of Democratic Security in Central America**. This project has considerable potential to generate an original, robust assessment of compliance with an important regional security mechanism. It

should significantly enhance the capacity of certain civil society leaders to understand and engage in security policy debates in the isthmus. It may also help promote the de jure revision and de facto revival of the Treaty of Democratic Security. One of the most innovative elements in the project is the mainstreaming of gender analysis throughout, due to the convergence of efforts by CRIES members, GESO and PBR. However, in the end PBR had to offer CRIES an extra CAD 100,000 to ensure the viability of this project, mostly as seed capital to secure complementary funding for the advocacy element. This was possible due to the increase in PBR's budget this fiscal year.

The competitive process also had the unanticipated effect of enabling PBR to nurture other ideas which, while not warranting the scale of funding required for regional research projects, do have the potential to make more focused contributions. The CEI small grant on **Small Arms Control in Nicaragua** should yield a solid study of national gun control legislation in comparative context, as well as proposals for legislative reform rooted in dialogue with key stakeholders. The RSP on **Integration of a Gender Focus in Security and Peacebuilding Studies** will enable GESO to generate a compendium of tools – including a bibliography, a literature review, an essay on analytical and methodological options and a list of experts – which should help researchers design much stronger gender elements in their projects on security and peacebuilding. This RSP is already enabling GESO to contribute to the efforts of FLACSO Guatemala and CRIES in this regard. The competitive process also stimulated further discussions with Cathy Blacklock and Cristina Rojas, which eventually led to their exploration on gender and peacebuilding in Colombia. That RSP will be discussed in the next section.

The competitive process has also proven useful for pipeline management. Knowing that PBR will appropriate almost CAD 0.5 million in a given quarter in Central America, for a solid regional project, is helpful when trying to spend a CAD 4 million budget wisely each year.

Taking stock and looking forward

By the end of 2001 PBR had appropriated just over CAD 1.2 million for regional projects in Central America. We have dedicated about 30% of one PY per year to nurturing this portfolio. What have we learned from this process?

Compared to our programming in Guatemala, it has taken longer to develop PBR programming at the regional level. We have learned that it is much more difficult to program at the regional level, given the challenges of finding and supporting partners who can deliver projects that will build capacity, generate knowledge and/or have policy impacts in several countries. This is a tall order since it presupposes the simultaneous emergence of policy space in several contexts, and of partners who are able to seize those opportunities plus coordinate their research and policy engagement efforts in a timely manner.

PBR has used RSPs, small and large grants to deal with these challenges in Central America. Over time we have developed a model that seems to combine these modalities in an optimal

fashion. An RSP was used to collectively take stock of relevant research, explore possible priorities for future research and develop a network of potential partners in the isthmus. On that basis a mechanism was created to facilitate the rigorous, transparent and competitive selection of a promising large grant. Through another RSP we provided seed money to two semi-finalists so that they could fully develop their preliminary proposals. The process also generated several proposals that could be funded as small grants and RSPs to nurture regional synergies.

Towards the end of the current programming cycle, PBR may want to assess the merits of this model by drawing on the evaluations built into all regional projects. In the meantime, if PBR wishes to maintain a critical mass of programming in Guatemala, nurture regional programming and reserve resources for working in Colombia, it might be in our interest to maintain and indeed fine-tune the competitive mechanism at the Central American level. Our experience this year suggests that the following modifications might be considered:

- Delay the initiation of the competitive process until January 2002 to allow the new PO to prepare the groundwork properly. This should generate a large grant by the end of 2002, enabling the winners to start their project at the beginning of their next fiscal year.
- Focus the call for proposals (CFP) on fewer sub-themes. Our experience suggests that promising proposals could be expected on small arms, gender and peacebuilding, and possibly on land-related issues if this can be developed with MINGA colleagues.
- Develop more detailed guidelines for the CFP, for example by clarifying the rationale behind each priority themes and our expectations on gender mainstreaming.
- Consider putting between CAD 400-500,000 on the table upfront and/or investing more time to help semi-finalists generate parallel funding pledges before the final selection.
- Advertise the CFP more widely, including through DFAIT and CIDA missions. This might also be a way of getting these agencies interested in co-funding winning proposals.
- Involve other PBR members in the process to nurture cross-regional synergies early on.

Colombia

Initial steps

Although PBR does not have a mandate to develop full programming in Colombia, in April 1999 the PI decided to add Colombia to its list of countries “under exploration”. The case for including Colombia was made on four grounds: a breakthrough in the peace process(es) could open spaces for postwar reforms akin to those which PBR has contributed to in other contexts; PBR was receiving pressures from Colombian institutions, Canadian agencies and other IDRC programs to get involved; the sophistication of Colombian researchers suggested that they might contribute

much to global learning in this domain; and the uncertain future of PBR programming in Central America suggested that it might be wise to open doors elsewhere in the Hemisphere.

Based on this limited mandate, PBR developed new contacts with a range of Canadian government agencies, NGOs and academics working on Colombia, primarily through the Annual Consultations of the Canadian Peacebuilding Coordinating Committee (CPCC). We used the second Central American Program Development RSP to commission Luís Barón – whom PAN was hosting as a sabbaticant – to undertake a scoping study for PBR. Starting from the premise that most of the relevant Colombian research was overly academic and backward looking, Barón identified a number of niches in which new research, more linked to dialogue processes, could be nurtured with effect. These included some of the substantive issues under negotiation between the government and the FARC guerrillas (such as agrarian reform), gendered perspectives on peacebuilding, and comparative research on lessons learned from other peace processes.²²

Another possible niche identified by Barón was research on the uses of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) for war and peace. This idea was developed into a proposal on **ICTs and Peacebuilding in Colombia**, by the Centre for Research and Popular education (CINEP) and several partners, including the Permanent Assembly for Peace. In late 2000 PBR decided to co-finance this project with PAN, as a pilot initiative in Colombia. Through this project CINEP and its partners are looking at the way key actors (government, guerrillas, paramilitaries and civil society organisations) use ICTs to advance their war or peace agendas. On the basis of that research and of dialogue with key stakeholders, they will present proposals to stimulate the more effective use of ICTs for peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Building on these steps and of the Colombia component of the Arias project, PBR sent its first PO to Colombia in December 2000. That visit helped generate a clearer sense of potential partners for PBR programming. After his return the PO planned to table a paper expanding on options in this regard, but changes inside PBR suggested that the time was not ripe for new initiatives. Meanwhile, the decision to hire a new PO to lead PBR programming in Latin America opened the door to recruit a professional with experience on the ground in Colombia.

Second-generation explorations

Instead of writing a strategy paper the lead officers decided to draw on the Barón study and on their experience with the Diagnóstico process to initiate two more focused explorations of programming options for PBR in Colombia. The first is a study on **Gendering Peacebuilding Processes in Colombia**, being carried out by a team of three seasoned researchers – a Colombian, a Canadian-Colombian and a Canadian – with considerable policy experience. This study will map of institutions working at the intersection of gender and peace in Colombia, assess the current state of research in this area, and identify research gaps/opportunities for collaborative initiatives to nurture applied research in this domain. The outputs from this

²² Luis F. Barón Porras, “Producción de conocimiento para la paz,” abril 2000.

exploration should be ready for dissemination by early 2002. It is worth noting that CIDA's new draft programming strategy for Colombia flags women as a target sector and that several major Canadian NGOs have presented CIDA with proposals to establish field programs that would accompany the work of this sector on peacebuilding issues in Colombia.

The second initiative is a **Feasibility Study on Research Regarding Agrarian Policies for Peacebuilding**. In December 2001 the new Latin America PO completed negotiations on this project with COLCIENCIAS, the main governmental body funding scientific research in Colombia. The study should yield an assessment of the state of the art in this critical area, and leads for nurturing research that might influence the peace negotiations and related public policies. It should allow PBR to test the idea of channeling some of its funds through a competitive grants selection process managed by a respected national institution. Finally, it should also enable PBR to expand its contacts with key researchers and other stakeholders working at the intersection of agrarian issues and peace, while renewing the attempt to forge a partnership with MINGA in this area of potential mutual interest.

Of course, these are not the only issues on which PBR might want to support research in Colombia. Other salient concerns on which Colombians are already conducting research include violence, the political economy of warfare, what kind of peace, etc. While looking at thematic entry points for PBR programming, it will also be important to formulate a sophisticated answer to the question of whether this is the right time for PBR to develop concerted programming in Colombia. The answer hinges on one's analysis of the prospects for peace – namely for building peace under conditions of war, or for a steady movement towards comprehensive accords akin to those signed in some Central American and Southern African peace processes – and the possibilities for influence through research under either of these scenarios. This is the fundamental question that a strategic inquiry should answer. Other matters that might be addressed by a strategy paper include potential partners, modalities, and what impact an expansion of PBR programming in Colombia would have on other priorities – given that the 10% PY we have dedicated to Colombia thusfar would not suffice in a programming mode.

The new PO for Latin America well-placed to help PBR formulate sensible responses to these questions, drawing on her own experience on the ground.²³ She will also be backed up by two other POs who have some knowledge of Colombia. We hope that the PBR-supported projects and explorations underway will help the new team in this important endeavour.

Accomplishments, challenges and options

²³ See Colleen Duggan, "Research for peacebuilding in Latin America: future prospects for programming in Colombia," August 2001, for a promising initial analysis in this regard.

Together, the three quotations at the beginning of this paper evoke a set of interlocking challenges that IDRC faces on many themes, in many regions: the difficulty of setting priorities among the numerous issues and countries deserving support, the importance of focusing to achieve influence, and the challenge of nurturing research that contributes to policy dialogue and social change in complex environments. PBR has always grappled with these difficulties, but over the past three years we have made progress on each front in parts of Latin America.

In Guatemala, our priority country in the Hemisphere, we have established a robust programming framework, an extensive network of contacts, and a promising portfolio of medium-sized projects on critical issues: land, security, education and fiscal reform. Most of these projects are strengthening national research and policy dialogue capacity, most are generating new knowledge in the national context, most have innovative gender elements, and some have the potential of contributing to modest policy changes. If these accomplishments remain fragile, it is mainly due to the crisis of governance in the country – even though Guatemala is one of the most enabling environments in which PBR is currently active. The challenge in Guatemala is to nurture our extensive network of interlocutors, consolidate PBR programming around the most promising themes, maintain a balance between established and emerging institutions – paying special attention to indigenous researchers – continue to provide substantive accompaniment to key initiatives, and plan for a systematic evaluation of our programming in this flagship country.

The development of PBR programming at the regional level in Central America has required more effort but we have established an innovative and effective model – on the basis of some experimentation and structured consultation with a range of partners and interlocutors. Indeed, last year PBR created a competitive grant selection mechanism that has already generated a promising large project on regional security, and smaller complementary initiatives on light weapons and gender. There is considerable potential for the further development of regional initiatives on these themes. The challenge in Central America is to expand our regional network, fine-tune the competitive mechanism to enable the continued development of promising large projects and occasional small grants around carefully-selected themes, provide more substantive accompaniment, while paying greater attention to generating synergies in the region and beyond.

At present PBR only has a mandate to explore programming options in Colombia, but within that framework we have also made progress. Through ongoing liaison with Canadian agencies and limited contacts with Colombian researchers, we have begun to build a network of interlocutors and accumulate knowledge. We have accompanied the Colombia element of the Arias project, and are co-financing a pilot project with PAN on ICTs and peacebuilding in Colombia. We have also moved from a first-generation scoping study to a more sophisticated exploration of programming options in two areas: gender and agrarian policy. Clearly, it is in Colombia that PBR has the most space for innovation in Latin America. This is also the country in which PBR's solid political analysis, and the new PO's field experience, will be most required.

Other innovations by PBR's Latin American programming are also noteworthy. These include the development of operational tools such as the information sheets for most projects and program components, a project tracking device, an annotated contacts list and so on. It would have been difficult and in some cases impossible to develop these tools – and our broader programming in the region – without the contributions of a Research Intern in 2000, who became a Research Officer dedicated to Latin America in 2001. Since it will be difficult to replicate this arrangement in the future, it may be worth thinking about alternate ways in which PBR might mobilize the human resources required to nurture its programming in Latin America.

One area in which we could innovate much more is in fostering cross-regional synergies. Several of our partners have asked IDRC to provide bibliographic references or link them to researchers and practitioners working on similar issues in other contexts. This seems to be working in the Americas, as indicated by the collaborative initiatives we have fostered to date: between CRIES, FLACSO and GESO on gender and security issues; between CONGCOOP, a Colombian and a US researcher working on market-assisted land reforms; between COMG and FLACSO to enable them to carry out research on the fiscal aspects of indigenous rights in Guatemala; and between Canadian researchers and Colombian counterparts through the Engendering Peace study.

We have also occasionally passed on documents and references from partners working in Europe and Africa. The PCIA project enabled us to go further, by bringing PBR partners from several regions together to share experiences and shape future work on conflict impact assessment. Yet PBR could nurture such linkages in other ways. We could be more systematic in sharing the results (publications, bibliographies, literature reviews, human resource data bases, etc.) of flagship projects which PBR has supported – from the War-Torn Societies Project to International IDEA and PCIA. We could commission the development of such tools where they do not exist. We could actively link partners working on similar issues, for example FLACSO and IEPADES with CDD and ASDR in Africa. We could coordinate efforts to reflect on common challenges – such as how one nurtures and assesses the influence of research on peacebuilding, or the big issue of what kind of peace we are all building in this brave enterprise.

At its most ambitious, cross-regional collaboration could also include coordinating programming in several regions to generate the critical mass of research and policy dialogue required to achieve influence at multiple levels, in selected countries and perhaps even globally. For example, under different circumstances PBR might have worked with our partners in several regions to develop initiatives that could have fed into the International Conference on War-Affected Children hosted by Canada in 2000. Other issues of utmost importance in Latin America – from the regulation of small arms to the agrarian policies most conducive to sustainable peace – may be taken up in global fora over the coming years. A challenge for PBR is to anticipate even one such opportunity and nurture cross-regional collaboration that will be useful to our partners in the South, both through the global policy shifts to which it might contribute, and through the direct inputs into national efforts that global initiatives might yield. Let us begin thinking creatively about how we might nurture such synergies between the strong, focused regional and global programming which PBR could develop over the coming years.

Annex 1: PBR projects in Latin America, 1998-2001

Table 1: PBR projects in Guatemala, 1999-2001

Title & #	Partner(s)	Appropriations	Disbursements	Contract date	Status
Tax reform (RSP: 004619)	USAC	26,300	26,300	3 May 1999	Closed 31 March 2000
Military policy (RP: 004640)	FLACSO	101,094	89,298	20 May 1999	Closed 8 March 2001
Peacebuilding in Huehue (RP: 100074)	CEDFOG	60,000 +14,300	70,127	6 August 1999 1 December 2000	Closed 31 May 2001
Proposal development (RSP: 100169)	CNPRE	3,500	3,500	26 August 1999	Closed 29 February 2000
Agrarian jurisdiction (RP: 100404)	CNPT	126,100	125,510	28 January 2000	Closed 28 September 2001
Financing education (RP: 100437)	CNPRE	123,400	115,890 (balance to new project)	4 April 2000	Closure pending
Inter-ethnic relations (RP: 100496)	CIRMA	150,000	149,600	29 May 2000	Closed 13 December 2001
Security policy (RP: 100648)	FLACSO	129,000 +31,729		30 October 2000	Active
FONTIERRAS (RP: 100581)	CONGCOOP & CNOC	129,400		5 December 2000	Active
Budget & Maya (RP: 100501)	COMG & FLACSO	79,700		8 March 2001	Active
Financing education II (RP: 101034)	CNPRE	156,900		16 January 2002	Active
Regularizing land tenure (RP: 101068)	CNPT	196,900		5 November 2001	Active
Totals	10 RP, 2 RSP	1,198,923			

Table 2: PBR projects in Central America, 1999-2001

Title & #	Partner(s)	Appropriations	Disbursements	Contract date	Status
Mitch Fund (RSP: 50401)	numerous	100,000		30 November 1998	Active
CA program develop I (RSP: 4468)	A. Perez	7,000	8,199	30 June 1999	Closed 17 March 1999
Reintegration of ex-combatants (SG: 03972-03)	CEI	25,000	25,000	16 February 1999	Closed 30 January 2000
Evaluating governance (SG: 03972-08)	A. Saldomando	27,360	23,260	February 1999	Closed 30 March 2000
Local reintegration (RP: 004594)	Arias, CERCA, & PGU	300,000 +131,400	408,242	3 May 1999 6 June 2000	Closure pending
CA program develop II (RSP: 100167)	FUNDAUNGO and others	30,000	27,746	25 August 1999	Closed 25 September 2000
CA program develop III (RSP: 100765)	CRIES and ASIES	55,000	50,000 (to date)	2 December 2000	Active
Gender & security (RSP: 100879)	GESO	55,700		26 March 2001	Active
Small arms in Nicaragua (RP: 100982)	CEI	35,000		17 July 2001	Active
Revising the Treaty on DS (RP: 100955)	CRIES	449,600		31 August 2001	Active
Totals	5 RSP, 3 RP, 2 SG	1,216,060			

Table 3: PBR projects in Colombia, 2001

Title & #	Partners(s)	Appropriations	Disbursements	Contract date	Status
ICTs & PB in Colombia <i>pilot project</i> (RP: 100600)	CINEP, ASAPAZ, Javeriana etc.	75,500 (plus 75,000 from PAN)		18 January 2001	Active
Gendering PB in Colombia <i>exploration</i> (RSP: 100965)	C. Blacklock, C. Rojas, E. Caro	53,780		18 June 2001	Active
Feasibility of Agrarian & PB <i>exploration</i> (RP: 101035)	Colciencias etc.	101,700		2 January 2002	Active
Totals	2 RP, 1 RSP	230,980			

Annex 2: Overarching comments by Silke Reichrath

Policy Impact

Since PBR's mandate is to support research *on and for* peacebuilding, policy impact is one of the PI's primary goals, alongside knowledge generation and capacity building. However, it is not surprising that the projects PBR has supported in Guatemala have not yielded policy impacts yet, given that most of them are just ending now and policy influence is a long-term process. It should also be kept in mind that PBR's contribution to research in Guatemala is very modest, and that research results are only one of many factors that shape policies.

As discussed in the paper, the implementation of proposed policy reforms hinges on the general governance situation and the will of the relevant policy makers and other actors behind the scenes. In the Guatemalan context, the fiscal pact was not implemented, education reform is held up by the lack of a fiscal pact or a commitment in Congress to increase funding for education, and the law proposals designed by the Land Commission may not be passed in Congress.

This puts into question PBR's emphasis on policy reform - is it still valid in a context of long-term governance crisis? Does the emphasis on policy reform lead to 'coyunturalismo', as some of PBR's partners critique? Research feeding into a specific policy process has to be produced quickly and has to focus on a specific 'solvable' aspect of a problem. Solid research, on the other hand, takes time and has to look at the many facets of a problem. This suggests a trade-off between the goals of knowledge generation and policy impact and validates a two-pronged approach, where some projects focus on knowledge generation to set the basis for future policy change (e.g. FLACSO, CIRMA) and some projects focus on immediate policy impact (e.g. CNPRE, CNPT, USAC).

PBR's urge to focus its programming is particularly important for the long-term research, where a tighter focus could enable the PI to provide more technical support and to nurture cross-regional programming. However, PBR should maintain an openness to particularly promising initiatives in areas other than the focus area(s) to support research that responds to an acute need and to take advantage of a favourable policy environment that opens up. This could be in the form of a contingency fund or in the form of 'areas of responsive programming'. In a shifting policy environment, PBR should not put all its eggs into one basket in case the basket breaks, like in the case of the Fiscal Pact. The likelihood to foster cross-regional programming in policy-oriented research is also smaller than in long-term research, as the policy environment is different in each country and the research has to be highly specific.

COPMAGUA

In comparative terms, the verdict is still out on who was more successful, CNPRE or CNPT. The future of both CNPT's draft laws and CNPRE's financial proposal depend on decisions taken in the respective ministries and in Congress, on the CNP's ability to follow-up and lobby for their

proposals, and on the macro-political context. Nevertheless, both CNPs have produced the product they were supposed to produce. One of the fundamental difficulties for the CNPT's dissemination and advocacy efforts is that they researched an item that is not coming up for discussion in the Mixed Commission yet.

It was not so much the fragmentation of COPMAGUA that affected the CNPT, who had always kept an arms-length distance from COPMAGUA headquarters; the fragmentation of the campesino movement had a much more serious effect on the CNPT's credibility and negotiating capacity because it created an opposition within civil society. However, both processes are related to the fragmentation of the left in general, including that of the URNG.

Gender mainstreaming

PBR has engaged in a series of experiments to encourage partners to incorporate a gender perspective in the Guatemalan and Central American projects. The initial approach was to suggest a gender analysis as part of the methodology and the inclusion of women among the people to be interviewed and participants in workshops. This was often met by lip service to respond to the requirement or by confusion as to how to comply.

In several cases - FLACSO I, CNPT, CNPRE - IDRC suggested the inclusion of a gender consultant in the research team to provide the necessary expertise. The experiences of FLACSO and CNPT in this respect were rather unsatisfactory, as the consultants produced a separate report but were never incorporated in the team, and their findings were not included in the final publications. In the case of CNPRE, the team was committed to producing a proposal for ethnic and gender equity in education reform, which was reflected in the qualitative recommendations of the proposal (i.e. for curriculum reform, teacher training etc.). However, neither the team nor the gender consultant had the expertise to look at the education budget, the main subject of the study, from a gender perspective. This underlines the need for gender consultants to have subject matter expertise to make a contribution to the project, rather than conducting a minor parallel study. CNPT has learned this lesson and proposed to include an activist for women's access to land rather than an expert on gender in the next phase of their project. Another approach to gender consultancies would be to hire a consultant to include gender in the research design,

Another response to the challenge has been to hold workshops on gender and a specific theme. In the area of gender and security, an interesting collaboration has evolved between CRIES, FLACSO Guatemala and GESO. CRIES submitted a proposal for research on the Treaty of Democratic Security to PBR's grant competition and used the seed-funding for project development to hold a workshop with the dual purpose of familiarizing the researchers with issues at the intersection of gender and security and of elaborating a proposal with a strong gender perspective. At the same time, PBR and GESO began to collaborate on a project to develop theoretical, methodological, and bibliographical tools for research at the intersection of gender and security. GESO contributed substantively to CRIES' workshop and the subsequent revisions of draft proposals; they also have a seat on the project's evaluating committee.

FLACSO Guatemala also decided to host a workshop on gender and security in Guatemala, to bring together a group of researchers working on security issues to overcome the resistance to the idea of a gender-analysis in security-related research and to construct an agenda for research at the intersection of gender and security. GESO gave a presentation based on their research to date on new concepts of gender and security and linkages between them. This workshop was useful to place the issue on the table and outline practical possibilities of ways to address it, which may lead to gender-specific research projects in the area of security sector studies.

Another approach to gender equity in research is to support women researchers, as PBR has in the cases of CEDFOG and the Arias Foundation (the research team was majority female), or research teams with a gender balance like the CIRMA team and GESO. However, working with female researchers does not necessarily lead to gender sensitive research; in all these cases, the projects displayed a certain level of awareness of women's needs and female participation, but not an explicit gender analysis (with the exception of GESO, whose expertise is in the area of gender analysis). The research community on security matters is predominantly female in Central America and yet has tended to be very resistant to suggestions to incorporate a gender perspective in their work.

Central America Competition

- The CA competition should be focussed on one 'theme of the year' (recommendable would be either land or security sector reform), not on a narrow sub-theme like small arms. Having all entries focussed on one theme will facilitate their comparison and selection and will make it easier to nurture cross-regional linkages.
- In the guidelines, the selection criteria should be clearly defined, e.g. inclusion of a gender and social analysis (with an explanation of what that means, maybe in the form of a Spanish version of PBR's gender analysis tools), policy impact/knowledge generation/capacity building (with definitions), a fundraising and advocacy strategy (with sample elements of such a strategy), importance of a strong consortium, M&E, etc.
- The CA competition should NOT explicitly attempt to prioritize capacity building as that would imply working with weaker partners.
- PBR should provide equal feedback to all, e.g. one round of comments on a draft proposal. If PBR discovers that several institutions are working on the same topic or researchers are involved with several projects, it could give them the opportunity to join forces, chose one project, or continue competing with each other.
- For both PBR's Guatemala programming and the CA mechanism, PBR could develop tools, e.g. two-pagers on gender/social analysis, M&E methods, elements of an advocacy strategy, a sample fundraising strategy, etc. These could be sent out to applicants, with the description of the CA competition, and with our info kits, and posted on the Web.